



# Terms of References – Expert on the development of an Organization Standard (Technical Specification) for processing enterprise LLP “AGROPROSPERITY”

## 1. Contracting body

### Hilfswerk International (HWI)

Grünbergstrasse 15/2/5,

1120 Vienna,

Austria

Type of organisation: NGO

## 2. Basic data

<b>Donor reference:</b>
NA
<b>Project title:</b>
Sustainable and Inclusive Silk Road Development
<b>Countries of implementation:</b>
Kazakhstan
<b>Source(s) of funding:</b>
Eurasia Group
<b>Project duration:</b>
01.09.2023 – 28.02.2026

## 3. Background

Hilfswerk International (HWI) is based in Vienna and is one of Austria's leading organisations for development cooperation in developing countries. Within the scope of HWI we provide worldwide assistance to people in need. Since 2008, HWI in Central Asia has been a driving force for quality and food safety of agriproducts. Directly in Kazakhstan, HWI is active since 2018. Our main pillars, i. e., areas in which HWI has been providing capacity building are food safety and traceability of agricultural products, commercial quality of agri-products, product and export promotion, incl. by applying strong marketing tools such as Geographic Indications and Terroir Products.

HWI's long-term strategy in Kazakhstan and Central Asia is to support sound business development & regional cooperation to accelerate sustainable and inclusive growth and economic development.

Outside of the primarily commercial farm sector, crop production on household plots has remained of importance throughout Central Asia. To this day, rural households contribute a significant share of total agricultural output, even though they cultivate a small percentage of total arable land. Their production is labour-intensive, in contrast to extensive agricultural production systems. They are dependent on market intermediaries and the added value of selling their products often remains with the market mediators. Traditional and cultural norms make it more difficult for women to gain access to decent and paid employment opportunities, markets, and institutions. Male migration mainly in the rural areas has additional negative effect on rural families' vulnerability.

The current project will address the following key challenges:



□ Food security is closely related to poverty and access to basic needs. Arable land is particularly scarce in the Central Asian region, but more than 60% of the people in Central Asia find employment in agriculture. Still, food security is an issue in Central Asia, most critical in Tajikistan, where more than 25% of children are malnourished. How is that possible? Food security depends (among other factors) on the (in)effective use of land. Close cooperation with smallholder producers and coaching them in effective use of their agricultural land and agrotechnical methods will improve food security in the target regions.

□ Food safety is an issue, in which the Central Asian countries, with the support of many international programs, has made progress mainly related to ensuring it on the processing level, but it is still quite a challenge at the production level. Good agricultural practice, efficient use of natural resources, and support to guarantee reliable and internationally recognized laboratory tests can help overcome this challenge. Food safety standards are not the first condition for exports, but they are also a guarantee for the health of the local population. Closely connected to food safety is the weak value chain traceability and insufficient cold chains. Food products which are stored inappropriately can harm consumers' health and cause recalls of production, which was aimed for export and selling.

□ Weak capacity of agricultural value chains is the result of inefficient production methods, unpaid work for many women, weak market connections, and strong dependence of small producers on intermediaries.

□ Weak capacities in marketing and product promotion hinder producers in the beneficial realization of their products. Indirect access to the market, unattractive but also unproper packaging of the products, scarce expertise, and inability to develop and implement successful marketing strategies are the main obstacles here. Marketing quality is poor, commercial quality standards are not sufficiently considered, and these are the quality criteria of the international buyers, but also of large local supermarket chains.

Against this background and based on 20 years of expertise and a solid network, Hilfswerk International (HWI) is developing a local social enterprise. It will buy raw material (fruits) from smallholder producers at a fair price, process, refine and promote the product, thus ensuring sustainable sources of income, improved job opportunities and enhance recognizability of local products on local, regional, and international markets.

**Project Objective:** Smallholder farmers in Makhtaaraal and Zhetissay districts of Turkestan region (South Kazakhstan) have improved income and access to markets and demanded services.

**Results & Measures:** A newly established social enterprise in Makhtaaraal and Zhetissay districts of Turkestan region will process, refine, and promote locally sourced agricultural products based on stable contracts with and fair payment to smallholder farmers. Additionally, it will develop and provide services (agronomy, post-harvest management, food safety and commercial quality) and inputs (seed, plant protection products and fertilizers) to the farmers. Trainings for women, who are mostly engaged in harvesting and sorting, as well as coaching for processing facility staff in production technology will be designed and conducted as well. The design and implementation of a marketing strategy, the introduction of internal quality control systems and necessary external certifications will ensure the promotion of the refined products to local and international markets.

**Expected positive change process:** The services and inputs will help small farmers improve production practice, make it more resource-efficient, increase productivity and quality of their products. The processing facility will buy from them the products, which they do not manage to sell fresh, thus improving income of farmers and striving a waste-free production by processing and refining even seeds and kernels, which are usually thrown away. The newly established social enterprise is anticipating and meeting the needs of small agricultural producers, as well as their families and communities through creating opportunities to obtain stable income with more paid jobs and fair revenue from selling products and services.

#### **4. Purpose of the contracted tasks**

The project aims to employ an expert responsible for the development of the **Organization Standard (Technical Specifications)** for local social enterprise LLC "Agroprosperity" operating in Zhetesai district, Turkestan region, Republic of Kazakhstan. The product range includes production of dried fruits, greens and herbs produced by sun-drying facilities.



## 5. Scope of work

### Task Description for Expert – Development of Organization Standard (Technical Specifications)

The expert shall be responsible for the development of the **Organization Standard (Technical Specifications)** for dried fruits and dried greens (dried herbs) produced by LLC **“Agroprosperity”**, in accordance with the national legislation of the Republic of Kazakhstan. The tasks include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. **Technology Assessment**

Conduct a comprehensive study of the sun-drying production processes used by LLC **“Agroprosperity”**, including all relevant stages:

- Preparation and sorting of raw materials
- Sun-drying techniques
- Packaging procedures
- Storage conditions
- Marking and labeling practices

2. **On-site Visit**

Undertake at least one visit to the production facility of LLC **“Agroprosperity”** to observe and document all key production technologies and operational steps. Identify specific elements to be formalized in the Organization Standard.

3. **Development of Organization Standard (Technical Specifications)**

Based on the findings, draft a complete Organization Standard (Technical Specifications) that defines the technical, safety, and quality parameters for the production of dried fruits and dried greens (herbs). The standard must fully comply with applicable food safety, quality, and labeling regulations of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

4. **Labeling Requirements**

Prepare a detailed description of the mandatory labeling text for the product packaging, including all required information in line with national food labeling legislation.

5. **Validation and Approval**

Coordinate with LLC **“Agroprosperity”** to review, validate, and finalize the developed Organization Standard and associated labeling materials. Ensure formal agreement and approval from the company.

## 6. Timetable & Deliverables

Task	Timeline
1. Technology Assessment	August 2025
2. On-site visit	August 2025
3. Development of Organization Standard	August 2025
4. Labeling Requirements	September 2025
5. Validation and Approval	September 2025
6. Report	September / October 2025

All tasks are to be carried out and in compliance with the HWI Project Coordinator and the HWI Regional Manager.

Above timeline is based on regular circumstances and can be subject to changes in case of external influence (e.g., complaints from potential bidders, delayed decision from Tender Commission).

## 7. Expected qualifications of the Contractor

Extended knowledge in food production and processing and technological processes in food processing SMEs (at least 7 years)

Experience in development standards and technical conditions for food processing SMEs (at least 7 years).

At least 10 years' experience in working in Central Asia

Good command in Russian

A professional, result-orientated, well-structured, giving a critical assessment of the study context/focus.

A focused and concise language, bringing important findings to a point.

Excellent communication skills



## **8. Contracting body's approach to be considered**

HWI is an NPO founded with the aim of providing worldwide assistance to people in need, regardless of their heritage, gender, or religion. HWI's work is oriented toward Austrian and international objectives of development cooperation. Therefore HWI expects all Contractors to respect its values as stated on the HWI website: <http://www.hilfswerk.at/HWI/english/about-us/mission-statement/hilfswerk-austria-international-mission-statement>

Regarding the contracted tasks HWI expects the outcome to consider

- the demand and needs of the target group(s) of the project,
- approaches and principles of the target country and
- sustainability aspects.